

VZCZCXRO1838
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHC #5482 0212058
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 212049Z JAN 09
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 3789
INFO IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 005482

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/01/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [KJUS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: INAUGURAL U.S.-IRAQ HIGHER COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING

Classified By: NEA A/DAS Timothy Betts for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On January 13, Secretary Rice chaired the inaugural Higher Coordinating Committee meeting, officially launching the implementation process called for in the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) between the United States and Iraq. The Secretary affirmed the U.S. commitment to the agreement. Prime Minister Maliki led the discussion on behalf of the Government of Iraq (GOI), joined by his Deputies Barham Salih and Rafea Essawi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoshyar Zebari, Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani, National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie and Senior Advisor Saidq al-Rikabi. The Secretary was joined by senior U.S. officials including Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, Under Secretary of the Treasury Dave McCormick, Deputy Under Secretary for the U.S. Department Agriculture Ellen Terpstra, USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore, Deputy National Security Advisor LTG Douglas Lute, and others. Ambassador Crocker represented Embassy Baghdad. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Secretary began by thanking PM Maliki, expressing the U.S. Government's enthusiasm for implementing the SFA and its commitment to take the practical steps to move ahead. She emphasized that the SFA, and the Security Agreement are historic, "living documents" that symbolize the long-term friendship between the U.S. and Iraq, and embody the U.S. commitment to Iraq's democratic future.

¶3. (C) Maliki followed with thanks to the Secretary and to the agreement's negotiating team for all their efforts. He noted that the "difficulties" surrounding the agreements, and with Iraq's security, are "behind us now," and it was time to build on the shared successes in the fight against terrorism. Maliki pledged high-level GOI commitment to swift implementation of the SFA. He has convened a team that represents the more senior members of his Cabinet and advisory circle. The PM also noted that Vice President-elect Biden, during their conversation earlier this week, informed him the new administration is prepared to continue implementation of the agreements. PM expressed optimism and hope that this commitment would continue.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Crocker introduced the supporting Joint U.S.-Iraq Coordination Committees (JCCs) and began detailing the objectives of the Services and Information Technology, Economic and Energy, and Law Enforcement and Judicial JCCs (Note: there are five JCCs total, with the additions of the Cultural, Educational and Scientific JCC and Political and Diplomatic JCC. End Note.) Technical challenges with the secure video teleconference equipment made it difficult to hear this discussion, and ultimately led to wrapping up the substantive discussion and moving on to closing remarks.

¶5. (U) Deputy Prime Minister Salih noted that the GOI agreed to the objectives of the JCCs as described by Ambassador Crocker, but asked for additional focus on debt relief, private sector development and foreign investment. MFA Zebari added that the GOI looks forward to working with the United States on reviewing the United Nations Security Council Resolutions related to Iraq. Secretary Rice took the commitment on behalf

of the United States to engage on these issues.

¶6. (U) Maliki added two final practical proposals: 1) agreement to conduct HCC meetings at this senior level every six months or as needed, and 2) jointly state 10 to 20 practical objectives the JCCs could address in the first three months of implementation. The Secretary agreed with the former and committed to engagement on the latter.

¶7. (U) The Secretary and PM exchanged farewells, and said they looked forward to continuing their personal friendship.
BURNS